

State of Alaska

Department of Health & Social Services

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NEWS RELEASE



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Community Health & EMS Section distributes 150 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) statewide

\$237,000 federal HHS grant reaches 22 communities, government agencies

The Alaska Dept. of Health & Social Services, Section of Community Health and Emergency Medical Services (CHEMS) is pleased to announce that it purchased and distributed nearly 150 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) statewide through a \$237,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration's Rural AED Grant Program.

"Cardiovascular disease is the second leading cause of death in Alaska," Mark Johnson, Chief, Community Health & Emergency Medical Services said. "The most important treatment for sudden cardiac arrest is defibrillation; because the longer defibrillation is delayed, the poorer the chances of survival."

An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a machine that analyzes the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, tells a trained operator to deliver a shock to a victim of sudden cardiac arrest. Unlike a heart attack -- where blood flow to the heart muscle is temporarily blocked -- cardiac arrest occurs when the heart's normal electrical rhythms become erratic, causing the heart to stop pumping blood effectively.

CHEMS prepared and submitted the statewide application on behalf of over 20 community partnerships that responded to the request for local proposals. A proposal evaluation committee determined distribution of the devices based on medical oversight and evaluation of the program.

The funding for the purchase of the first set of AEDs was obtained in September 2002. CHEMS has submitted an application for the second year of funding and expects to be notified of the amount of the award in September 2003.

The recipients and number of AEDs received are:

Alaska Department of Public Safety	30
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	2
Bethel Public Safety	6
Bristol Bay Area Health Corp.	4

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Capital City Fire Rescue	4
Delta Rescue Squad	2
Edna Bay Fire Department	1
Fairbanks North Star Borough	26
Homer	2
Kenai Peninsula EMS Council	18
Ketchikan Fire Dept.	6
Kodiak Island Borough	2
Maniilaq Association	7
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	12
Norton Sound Health Corp.	6
Petersburg Volunteer Fire Dept.	2
Sitka Volunteer Fire Dept.	6
Skagway Fire Dept.	4
Tri-Valley Volunteer Fire Dept.	4
Unalaska/Dutch Harbor	1
Valdez Fire Dept.	2
Wrangell Volunteer Fire Dept.	2

For more information, contact the Section of Community Health and Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Medical Services Program at (907) 465-3027.

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